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RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 000349

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/MUSTAFA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/25/2016
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [IS](#) [KDEM](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [PBTS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: PALESTINIAN LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS: ELECTION DAY
SITREP #6 AS OF 12:15 AM, JANUARY 26 2006

REF: A. JERUSALEM 00338

[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 00324

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: As of midnight on Election Day, the Central Elections Commission (CEC) was counting votes with preliminary results not expected until later on January 26. Polls in Jerusalem closed at 2100L, two hours after the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The election was notably free of serious voting irregularities or substantial Election Day violence. PLC candidate Muhammad Dahlan projected to Consul General during a January 25 telcon that Fatah would gain at least 60 seats as a result of the elections. ConGen Poloffs have received indications from contacts working at the Central Elections Commission (CEC) and vote counting centers, indicating that exit polls released by Birzeit University's Development Studies Center and Khalil Shikaki's Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR) may have overstated Fatah's total PLC seats. Gunfire was reported sporadically in the proximity of vote counting centers in Nablus, the Balata Refugee Camp and Ramallah. Fatah activists conducted two unsuccessful attacks on vote counting centers in Nilin village and Jalazoun Camp, both located outside Ramallah. END SUMMARY

Elections Conducted without
Widespread Irregularities, Violence

[1](#)2. (C) As of midnight, two of the firm points are high election turnout (78 percent rather than the 81 percent reported in sitrep 5) and widespread recognition that the election was free of voting irregularities or substantial violence. The final results will be difficult to challenge.

Dahlan Claims Strong
Fatah Showing

[1](#)3. (C) Muhammad Dahlan, Fatah PLC candidate from Khan Yunis, estimated to Consul General late on January 25 that, according to his information, Fatah would win more than 60 seats in the PLC elections, followed by Hamas with 50 to 55 seats, the PFLP with 4 to 5 seats, with Mustafa Barghouthi, s &Independent Palestine8 and &Third Way8 winning a combined four to six seats. In the Gaza district races, Dahlan estimated that Fatah would win all three seats in Rafah and four of five seats in Khan Yunis, one seat in Deir al-Balah, two in North Gaza, but none of the eight seats in Gaza City. He also indicated a strong Fatah showing in the West Bank, with significant victories in Jenin, Nablus, Jerusalem, and Hebron. (Comment: With no preliminary results yet posted by the CEC, Dahlan did not explain how he had arrived at these estimates. Palestinian contacts operating

at CEC headquarters have provided a more sobering assessment of Fatah,s performance. End comment.)

Pollsters Race to
Publish Products

¶4. (C) Arab and Western media outlets quickly rushed to publish the results of exit polls conducted by Birzeit University and Khalil Shikaki. ConGen Poloffs have received reports from CEC officials and contacts involved in the vote count at the district level, suggesting exit polls may have overestimated Fatah's PLC seat tally. Final results will likely not be available until the afternoon of January 26.

Updated Voter
Turnout Results

¶5. (C) According to CEC statistics, overall turnout reached 77.69 percent of registered voters. In the Gaza Strip, Rafah posted the highest percentage turnout at 89 percent, with Tubas district in the West Bank reporting a turnout of 84 percent. Competing exit polls from Birzeit and Khalil Shikaki,s Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research suggested a disparity in polling results, with Birzeit reporting 63 seats for Fatah and 58 for Hamas, while Shikaki,s polling indicating 58 seats for Fatah and 53 seats for Hamas.

Post-Election
Violence Minimal

¶6. (C) Celebratory and protest gunfire was reported in the proximity of polling centers in Nablus, Balata Refugee Camp, and Ramallah. No incidents of shooting directed at polling centers had been reported by midnight. Disgruntled Fatah activists wielding rocks and empty bottles attacked vote counting centers in Nilin village and Jalazoun Camp, both located outside Ramallah. PASF personnel and local officials reportedly fended off these attacks without further incident.

¶7. (U) ConGen's next sitrep will follow at 1200L on January 26.

WALLES